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I. Indochina

A. China/Vietnam

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1. As we had anticipated (we issued warning memorandum 14 February), Chinese attacked across VN border 17 February with elements of 7 armies. (Elements of 8 armies now engaged.)

-- Stated purpose to punish Vietnamese for alleged "provocations" along Sino-VN border

-- However, wider (but unstated) purpose to demonstrate to Vietnamese that China will not permit them to intrude with impunity into areas in SEA of vital concern to China, e.g., Kampuchea. In wake of VN invasion of Kampuchea China wants to show it is not a "paper tiger."

-- China's offensive also intended to show USSR that it cannot get away with using Vietnamese as Soviet surrogates in SEA in way that Cubans have been employed in Africa

2. Intense fighting at several points along the border especially in the Cao Bang, Lao Cai, and Lang Son areas

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- Deepest incursions in Lao Cai, Cao Bang, and  
Lang Son areas

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3. Invasion began at dawn on 17th and Chinese attacked virtually every town, village, and military position along frontier
  - Most assaults by battalions or regiments
  - One or more divisions attacked at Lao Cai, Cao Bang, Lang Son
  - Tanks and artillery provided fire support to infantry
4. A major military objective of Chinese invasion was destruction of a large part of Vietnamese forces defending border region
  - Largest assaults directed at paramilitary divisions at Lao Cai, Cao Bang, and Dong Dang-Lang Son (approx. 30,000 men)
  - Chinese consolidated after initial attack but now pressing forward on all fronts, particularly against Lang Son
  - China has more than 300,000 troops near border and capable of pushing deeper
5. A second major objective is to "teach Vietnamese a lesson" by defeating main forces

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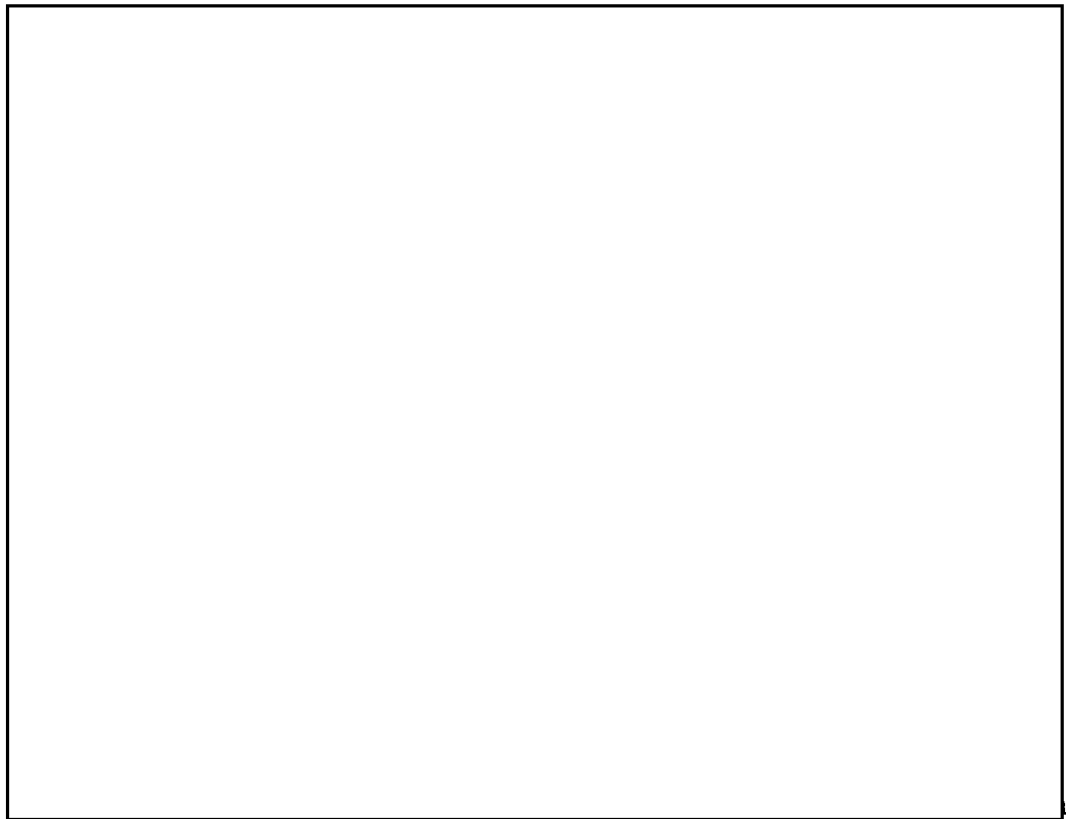
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- Draw infantry units now defending Hanoi (5 main force divisions) fighting as reinforcements
- Ease pressure on Kampuchean resistance by forcing Hanoi to recall some combat forces from that region

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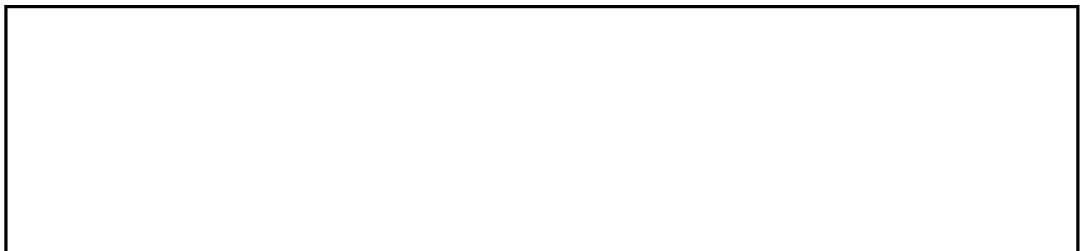
6. Major set-piece battle may thus be in offing



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7. China still building up border forces

- Five armies at time of invasion



- Continued buildup suggests China expects another round of fighting, on a larger scale

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8. Possibility of wider conflict therefore exists despite Chinese intentions to limit the fighting
- China has not yet inflicted sufficiently clear-cut defeat on Vietnamese to "teach them a lesson"
  - The deeper China goes into Vietnam, the more difficult it will be to withdraw - 1962 India war script may not work this time
  - China must also face prospect of Soviet response (Soviet-Vietnamese Peace and Friendship Treaty signed Nov 78)

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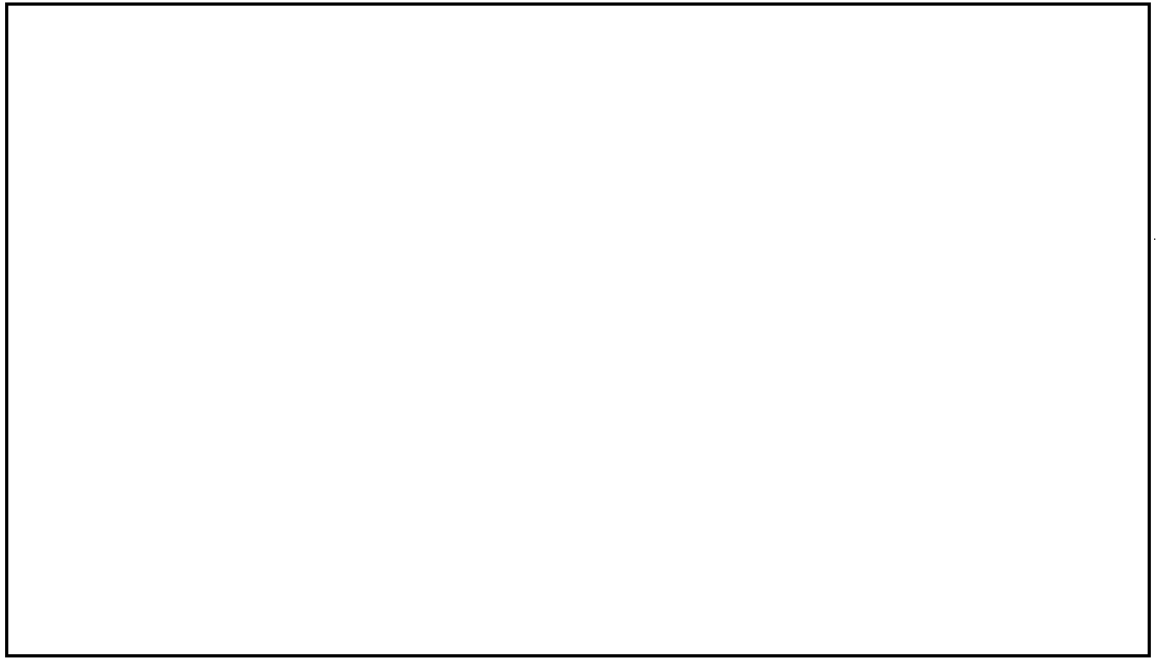
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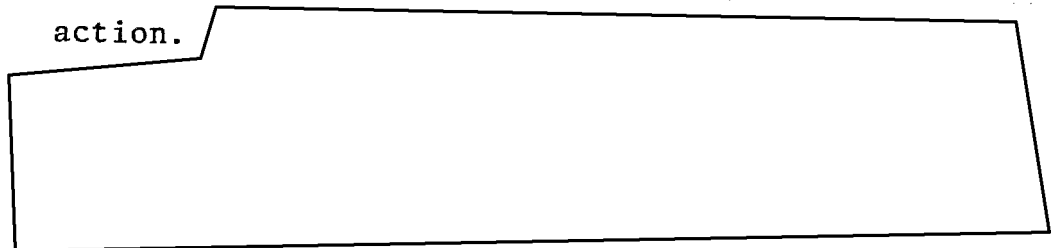
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B. Soviets watching with concern



4. Soviet officials have warned in non-specific terms of possible Soviet retaliation if Chinese go "too far." However, Moscow has been careful not to commit itself in advance to any course of action.

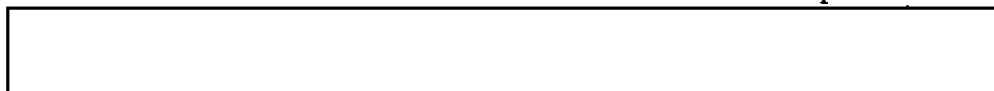
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5. Soviet options

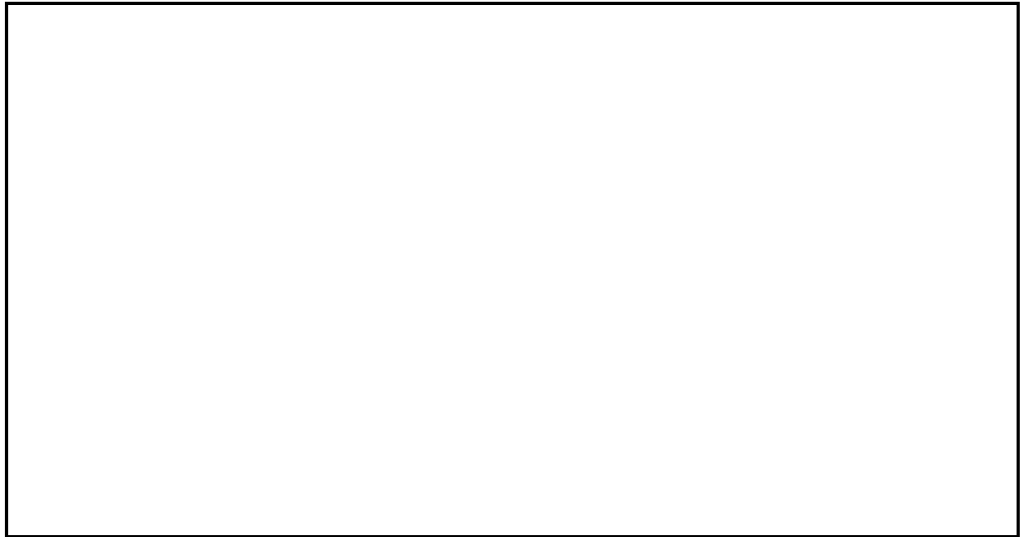
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-- consultations (under Treaty of Friendship



-- conspicuous military aid, possibly including "volunteer" fighter pilots ~~of~~ Soviet cargo

6.



7. Balance in North favors Soviets who could move with little or no warning

- Soviets - 44 divisions (500,000 men)
- Chinese - 98 divisions (1,700,000 men)
- Soviets - 12,000 tanks
- Chinese - 4,500 tanks
- Soviets - 2,250 aircraft
- Chinese - 2,700 a/c, but less capable

8. Soviet reaction will be determined by nature and severity of Chinese move against VN

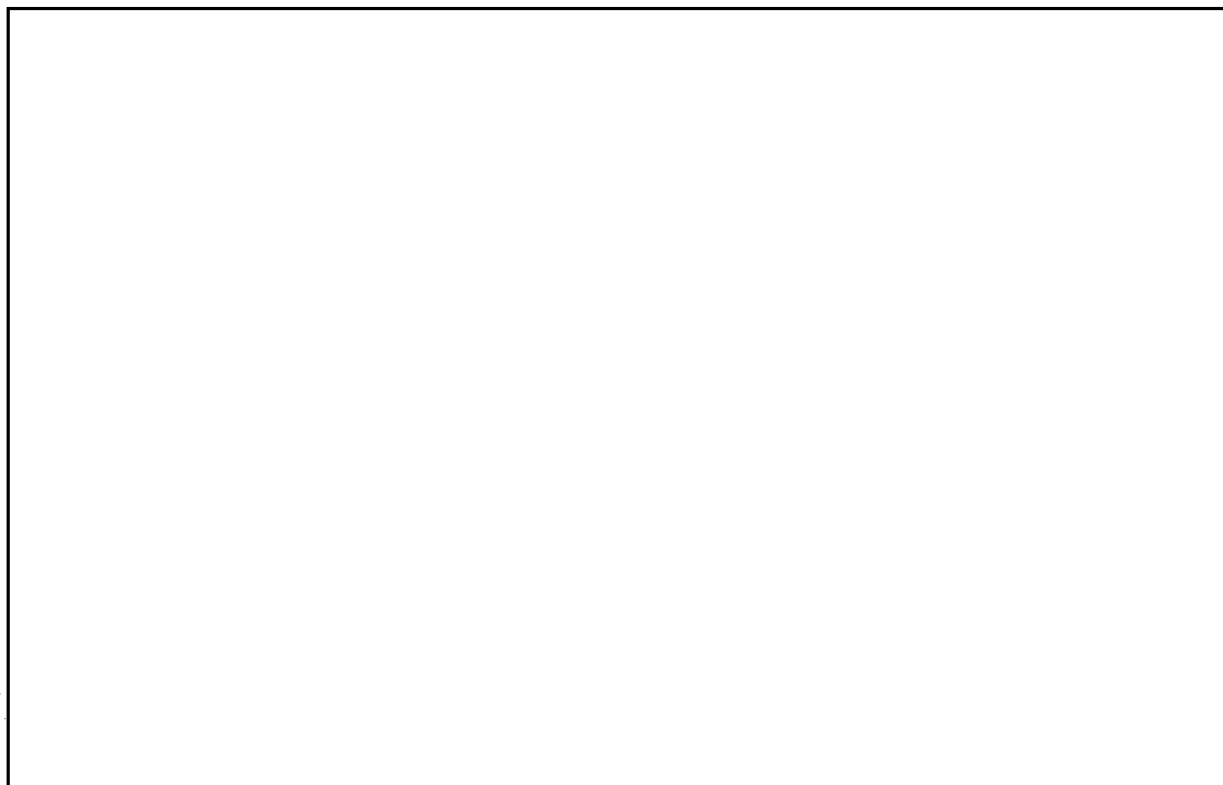
- Will wish to avoid protracted ground engagement in China

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well as NW. Chinese probably watching unusual Soviet local movements adjacent to NE China very closely.

C. Kampucheans continue stiff resistance in countryside



5. Chinese apparently managing to get supplies to Kampucheans via Thailand.
6. Sihanouk in Peking, where Chinese may use him to head a new "coalition government" more acceptable to Kampuchean and world opinion than Pol Pot  
-- Problem for Chinese is that Sihanouk refusing to work with Pol Pot
7. If Kampuchean resistance can hold out until rainy season arrives in May-June, odds favoring Vietnamese will be considerably reduced and prospects improved for establishment of viable anti-VN political structure.